The Outlook

A Running Commentary on Air Topics

The South Atlantic

MANY months have passed since the possibility of a British West African and South Atlantic service was seriously considered. We knew then (though not officially) that a subsidy would probably be forthcoming if and when the two interested air transport concerns, British Airways and British Continental Airways, could see their way to pool their resources. More accurately, perhaps, it seemed obvious that neither of the separate tenders was likely to be considered—particularly after the feelings engendered by the allocation of the Scandinavian mail contract.

When, therefore, the amalgamation of the two companies was announced we all felt that the South Atlantic service would be inaugurated in due course. Nothing further has been heard of the project, and it would seem that even the amalgamation is still a matter for conjecture. It is possible to guess at the nature of the particular differences of opinion which are causing what we hope is only a temporary hold-up—but the pages of a technical paper are not the place for guesses. Nevertheless, it would seem that someone or other will have to give way as graciously as possible for the sake of air transport as a whole. The present position is ridiculous.

Meanwhile, neither the air transport companies nor ourselves have forgotten the continued injustices of the booking agents' ban on companies outside the railway clearing house "ring." We shall continue to do our small part by returning to the subject at regular intervals until something *is* done about it.

Westward Ho!

THE explosives departments of Woolwich Arsenal are shortly to be moved to new arsenals at or near Chorley (Lancashire), Bridgend (Glamorgan), Irvine (Ayrshire), and Hereford. Some superficial thinkers have been writing in the papers that as the increasing endurance of aeroplanes will soon put all parts of the British Isles within the range of a Continental enemy, there is no great advantage in moving westward.

Such a view overlooks the fact that the passage of raiders across England, even for half an hour, very greatly increases the chances of the defence. The course of the raiders can be followed and plotted, and time is given for guns and fighter aeroplanes to get ready for them

. Perhaps some day the range of the bombers may be so great that they will fly all the way round by sea and attack from the west, but we need not tackle that hurdle until we come to it. What is of more immediate concern is the removal of the R.A.F. experimental establishments from Martlesham and Felixstowe to the West Coast, and it is to be hoped that this step will not be long delayed.

The Half-yearly Promotions

RESPECTFUL congratulations are offered by *Flight* to Sir Edward Ellington on being the third officer in all the world to attain the rank of Marshal of the Royal Air Force. Would that the title were a little less cumbrous! Years ago someone in a position to judge remarked that "Ellington is the finest staff officer in the Empire." The R.A.F. has certainly been fortunate in having an officer of that stamp as Chief of the Air Staff when the fury of expansion burst upon it. Under the guidance of this master hand all has gone smoothly, and the increase of the R.A.F. in the last two years has been one of the greatest marvels ever achieved by British organising genius.

It would, of course, be impossible to notice all the officers in the list of half-yearly promotions, but a few names are of general interest. Among the new Air Commodores are C. H. B. Blount, who for many years has been a shining light of Army co-operation, and R. Leckie, whose fights and adventures as a pilot at the R.N.A.S. station at Great Yarmouth make stirring reading for the younger generation. Two Naval officers of the Fleet Air Arm are promoted to Wing Commander and will presumably become officers in charge of flying on carriers. They will not have to be taught the A B C of their duties when they take over.

"Twins" for Carriers?

NOT many years back any talk of using monoplanes for carrier operation was received in the same vein as schemes for rocket-propelled air liners. But they have come: the American Navy has ordered Vought and Douglas ship-planes of completely modern monoplane design which are said to make an excellent showing on every score against comparable landplanes. A new crop of prototypes is almost due to appear in this country, and doubtless the monoplane formula will be well represented, if not exclusively adopted.

Soon we may see multi-engined types at sea with naval air arms, for France, certainly, and America, so it is said, are experimenting with twin-engined monoplanes planned for deck landing. For a given all-up weight the dimensions of modern monoplanes are being kept very small through the adoption of high wing loadings and lift-increasing devices, and the introduction of twin engines may confer considerably greater striking powers on the carrier-based aeroplane.

Overweather

STRANGE terms follow the adoption of new devices and techniques, ever swelling the aeronautical lexicon of jargon. It is easily understood why many of them are of transatlantic origin; not only do most important innovations (as witness retractable undercarriages, variable pitch airscrews, flaps and stressed-skin construction) find their first wide, practical application in the "States," but their exploiters have the happy knack of describing in a word or phrase what we ourselves would despair of delineating in anything more concise than a young treatise.

The latest flower to bud in the columns of the American technical press is "overweather," coined by the Transcontinental and Western Air (T.W.A.) concern to denote operation at altitudes which are generally free from storms and turbulence.

"Overweather" research flying with a Douglas D.C.1 and a Northrop Gamma has provided some encouraging data. The day when transports fly regularly in the neighbourhood of 30,000 feet seems nearer than is generally realised. Provision is being made in the forty-passenger monoplane taking shape in the Douglas shops to "bleed" oxygen into the ventilation system, but for real "overweather" work, according to T.W.A., "supercharged" cabins will be indispensable.

So long as intriguing new terms like "overweather" continue to signify that pioneer work is being done for the advancement of commercial flying, they will come gladly to our lips.